A LETTER TO THE AUTHOR OF AN OBSERVATION ON THE DESIGN OF ESTABLISHING ANNUAL EXAMINATIONS AT CAMBRIDGE.

By Mrs Jebb.

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REVEREND SIR,

IT had long been obſerved with aſtoniſhment, that amongſt the warm and violent oppoſers of the Scheme for eſtabliſhing Public Examinations, no one had attempted to anſwer, by fair and cool reaſoning, the many arguments which had been repeatedly urged in its favour.

But the trouble of writing was reſerved, it ſeems, for the moſt imminent danger. About two days before the late Plan was voted by the Senate, at a time when ſucceſs ſeemed almoſt inevitable, a Publication appeared, intituled, *A Letter to the Author of the Propoſal for the Eſtabliſhment of Public Examinations.*

But this Letter-writer did not attempt to prove there was no neceſſity for a reformation, nor did he find any material fault with the Plan; his chief deſign ſeemed to be to ſuggeſt an Idea, that it could not be executed, and to aſſert, that in caſe of a failure in the execution, it muſt ruin the Univerſity.

I can ſcarce think that either this extraordinary Idea, or aſſertion, could poſſibly affect the mind of any one of his readers. However, through great, and I may ſay *unaccountable* ill-fortune, the friends of Public Examinations were once more diſappointed of ſucceſs. But the oppoſers of the Scheme, I am perſuaded, ſaw clearly they had but little cauſe to triumph, and that the ſtrength of its friends, when collected, muſt be ſufficient to overcome every effort to defeat it. However, as it is thought to be a point of great conſequence to a certain College, or rather is thought to be a point of great conſequence to *certain perſons* in that College, that the Scheme ſhould fail, you, Sir, have attempted to ſtrengthen the oppoſition, by throwing out a printed ſheet, under the title of an OBSERVATION. But I own I am inclined to think, that neither the LETTER, nor your OBSERVATION have, in any degree, made it appear, that public Examinations are inexpedient or unneceſſary, or can any way tend to ſatisfy the public, that the majority of the oppoſers of the Scheme proceeded upon juſt and rational grounds. That Public will, I apprehend, ſtill ſuſpect one College of *ſelf-intereſt*,——another of retaining *the ſame ſpirit* which led them to oppoſe *former Regulations*,——and perhaps will imagine, that concealed reaſons may poſſibly have had ſome effect upon minds, which one would have wiſhed

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to have found unſullied, and have made Enemies of perſons, of whom better things might have been expected. But I will leave conjecture, and will give you my ſentiments upon what is contained in your Obſervation.

You aſſert, that the Writer of the Propoſal, delivered *en badinant*, " firſt ſuggeſted the Idea, that public Examinations might be adapted to the Lectures of the Tutors, and make the hearers of thoſe Lectures more attentive. That he offered ſome expedients for that purpoſe. But that what he thought of as an advantage, which might poſſibly ariſe from *a due execution of his ſcheme, if received with univerſal concurrence*, our warm Reformer eagerly embraced as the certain and immediate effect of general examinations, even though he rejected every method propoſed by his aſſociate, to connect them with the lectures, or to render them leſs diſagreeable to the Tutors or the Pupils."

It ſeems to be a point of no conſequence to the Scheme of Examinations, who firſt ſuggeſted the Idea, that they might be adapted to the Lectures of the Tutors: I am inclined to think, that the *poſſibility* was too plain ever to have been doubted:— But whether an exact plan *ought* to have been drawn up for that purpoſe, or whether it might not

have been *concluded*, that the Tutors and the appointed Examiners, would of themſelves have contrived, that, ſo far as was *neceſſary*, the Lectures and Examinations ſhould agree, may ſtill remain queſtionable. Yet, ſurely, Sir, no one can read Mr. Jebb's firſt publication upon this ſubject, without being convinced, that one principal End, propoſed by the Inſtitution of Public Examinations, was to render the Pupils more attentive to the Lectures of their Tutors; more particularly indeed to their Claſſical Lectures, he *truly obſerving*, that Claſſical Learning was the moſt neglected, and *wiſely ſuppoſing*, that ſuch neglect was owing to the Youth having ſo little encouragement to proſecute, with ſpirit, *ſo neceſſary* a ſtudy. If you had deigned to *examine* before you *reprehended*, you would have found, "that he acknowledges, and with pleaſure, that the ſtudies he would recommend, are already attended to in *public, and in private Lectures.*" * "I have, continues the Author, the honour of being acquainted with ſeveral Gentlemen who diſcharge, with credit, each part of their important truſt; whoſe inſtructions are fitted to qualify the Student for every ſcene of active life. But ſomething *more* than the *capacity* and *fidelity* of the Tutor *is required* in order *to the improvement of the Pupil*: and *that* Something, the inexhauſtible fund of honour would effectually ſupply." From the above, nothing

* Remarks upon the preſent Mode of Education, &c. 4th Edit. p. 12.

nothing can be plainer, than that it was the deſign of the Author to ſecure the attention of the Pupil to the Lectures of their Tutors.

But indeed, you ſeem not ſufficiently to have attended to the Author of the propoſal, delivered *en badinant*. His words are theſe: " The chief inſtructions which the Youth of the Univerſity receive, are from the Lectures of their Tutors. If the public examinations can be adapted to theſe Lectures, *they muſt have a conſtant daily influence upon the hearers, and make them more attentive to every thing they are taught*." Surely ſomething more than a poſſibility is expreſſed here! As to an univerſal concurrence, it is more to be wiſhed for than expected: Few points of any conſequence are ever carried without Oppoſition. It was, however, evidently the deſign of the Author of the late plan to remove every objection that had *the leaſt appearance of reaſon*, in order to make the concurrence as univerſal *as poſſible*. How it failed of having a *conciliatory* effect, thoſe beſt know who oppoſed it. But whenever the Plan for Examinations ſhall receive the ſanction of the Senate, and thereby obtain the force of a Law, we ſurely may hope that all Oppoſition will ceaſe; nay, may even expect, that the preſent Opponents will heartily concur in its due execution.

You

You aſſert, that the Author has rejected *every Method propoſed by his Aſſociate, to connect the Examinations with the Lectures.* He certainly has not confined himſelf to the *Method* preſcribed by the Author of the Propoſal, delivered *en badinant.*

But it is ſurely of little conſequence by what particular Method he effects his purpoſe, provided that Purpoſe be obtained.

To every Perſon, who ſhall be at the trouble of conſidering the GRACES, propoſed upon the 28th of October, it muſt appear, that he ſtudiouſly endeavoured *to connect the Examinations with the Lectures*, and, in every particular *to render them more agreeable to the Tutor and the Pupil.*

The Fifth of the GRACES, offered upon the 28th of October, propoſes, that "each Perſon attending the firſt Examination, 1776, ſhall be examined in the Latin and Greek Claſſics, and in the Elements of Geometry, and Algebra." The Author, in his laſt Publication, page 25, ſays, "The month of November, 1776, is thought preferable to any other ſeaſon, for the firſt Examination of the Students, admitted as above; becauſe, at that time, the Students of all denominations will have gone through a complete courſe of Lectures, with the Public Tutors,

Tutors, in Claſſics, Algebra, and Euclid; and alſo have had ſufficient leiſure, during the ſummer months, to review and digeſt thoſe Lectures: the initiatory courſe in every Society beginning in November, and ending in June following."

It was propoſed in the 9th Grace, that the Noblemen and Fellow-Commoners ſhould be ſubject to one other Examination 1777, and that each perſon attending ſhould "be examined in Locke's Eſſay on the Human Underſtanding, Natural Philoſophy, and Modern Hiſtory."

"It is preſumed, ſays the Author, page 35, that the inſertion of Modern Hiſtory, the *only part* of the propoſed courſe, which is not provided for in the Lectures of each Society, will not appear liable to any juſt exceptions. An opportunity of information, deſerving of the moſt ſedulous attention, is now very generally afforded to the Nobleman and Fellow-Commoner, in conſequence of the late Inſtitution of public Lectures on this intereſting ſubject."

Now, unleſs you can *prove* that the cuſtomary courſe of College Lectures is not as above deſcribed, I think we may venture to aſſert that the Author HATH *connected the Examinations with the Lectures*, and,

and, of courſe, that he HATH rendered them *more agreeable to the Tutor and the Pupil.*

You proceed, " And becauſe the calm Projector conceived, that the Pupils might become *more attentive* than they are, the other avows, as *a fundamental principle*, that *an almoſt univerſal inattention to every ſpecies of uſeful literature prevails in all the orders of our Youth.*"

Happy would it be for the Youth of this Univerſity, and for their Parents, if the above aſſertion had been occaſioned *merely* by an hint from the *Calm Projector.* But it ſeems the Author mentioned it as a fact that has been frequently lamented by the friends of the Univerſity, who have alſo lamented that this inattention is " *accompanied with an increaſing ſpirit of diſſipation and extravagance.*" This part of the ſentence you carefully avoided, for a reaſon too obvious to mention.

" The writer, you ſay, excuſes himſelf from *entering into a proof by facts.* He does wiſely in not calling theſe unexceptionable Witneſſes, they would declare againſt him." To perſons who are not entirely unacquainted with the Univerſity, the Author's *own reaſon* will, I apprehend, appear more likely to be the *true one*, than *that* which *you* have ventured

ventured to *ſuggeſt*. The detail, ſays he, " that would be neceſſary for this purpoſe, cannot, certainly, be a pleaſing employment to an academical man. And as what I reluctantly inſerted, relative to this ſubject, in a former publication, has never been controverted, I will ſpare myſelf the diſagreeable recital."†

You add, " Inattention to lectures is not a general fault among our Pupils." If you mean to take advantage of the *ambiguous* word *general*, I will, with pleaſure, confeſs, that there are *ſome exceptions*:— However, be this as it may—If *the neglect of uſeful Literature* is the point you are controverting, it ſurely is not *ſufficient* to ſay, that " Inattention to *Lectures* is not a general fault among our Pupils." The Youth may neglect what is properly called *uſeful Literature*, and yet attend *other Lectures*, which, however uſeful, certainly go under a different denomination. But if you are controverting what the Author had been ſaying in the Text, it may not be amiſs to remind you, that the Author's own words are, " That ſomething is wanting to ſecure a proper attention to the cuſtomary courſe of *College* Lectures." If you had ſufficiently attended to this, you would, I doubt not, have ſeen, that what you have aſſerted about *other Lectures*, is nothing to the

† See Remarks, &c. page 8, note.

purpoſe; and poſſibly you would then have *avoided* the inſertion of a *Calumny*, which, I am perſuaded, muſt *affect yourſelf* much more than the perſon at whom, I ſuſpect, it was aimed.

That the Lectures of the public Tutors are generally well attended, you ſay, "we may reaſonably *preſume*, becauſe the moſt eminent for abilities and induſtry among the preſent Tutors, and among thoſe, who, for many years exerciſed that office, and ſtill reſide among us, make few complaints, and have clearly and publicly expreſſed their judgment, that the Univerſity ſhould not interfere in this matter." But is it not as *reaſonable to preſume*, that thoſe worthy perſons, who favoured the Scheme of Examinations, ſaw clearly there were Evils to complain of, and voted for them from a conviction of their Neceſſity? May we not *reaſonably preſume*, that thoſe Gentlemen who, with ſuch *credit to themſelves*, and *advantage to the cauſe*, ſo aſſiduouſly laboured in the Syndicate, were actuated by a ſenſe that *ſomething was wanting* to ſecure the attention of our Youth to the inſtruction of their Tutors?* Have not a majority of our Tutors, men of great abilities and induſtry, clearly and publicly expreſſed their judgment in favour of Public Examinations? Have not many of the Heads, a great majority of our Profeſſors

* It is worthy of obſervation, that the Grace for the appointment of this Syndicate, paſſed the Senate without one diſſenting voice.

Profeſſors and Doctors, and many very reſpectable Maſters of Arts, frequently complained of the extravagance and diſſipation of our Youth, and publicly expreſſed their ſentiments, that the Univerſity *ſhould interfere in this matter?* Have not alſo a very great majority of the reſident white-hood Maſters of Arts, frequently expreſſed their wiſhes, that a Scheme, ſo likely to be ſalutary in its effects, might be paſſed into a Law? And ſurely, in ſuch a caſe as this, their judgment is equal to the judgment of thoſe of maturer age. Have not Parents alſo, perſons, who are but too capable of judging *whether there be reaſon to complain*—Have not the *public in general* lamented that our Univerſity, inſtead of being a School for *Religion* and *Literature*, is become a School of *Vice*, of *idleneſs*, and *diſſipation?*

That ſome perſons of character and abilities, voted againſt the Graces, I will not pretend to deny; I would not even inſinuate a falſehood, nor does *our Cauſe* want *ſuch* ſupport; but I am perſuaded, that although *prudence* may *at this time* reſtrain them from violently complaining, they cannot, they will not one of them, venture *plainly* to aſſert, *there is no cauſe of complaint.* If I am not much miſtaken, ſome of them *formerly* complained *loudly*, and I fancy *You*, Sir, ſcarcely are *ignorant*, that among the preſent *moſt violent* oppoſers of the Scheme, may

be found *one* Tutor at leaſt, who did not *always* ſuppoſe it to be *unneceſſary*, who even *ſtrongly declared his ſentiments in its favour*.

You tell us, that " Beſides the Lectures eſtabliſhed in the Univerſity, and in every College, almoſt all Noblemen and Gentlemen of fortune, and many whoſe circumſtances can ſcarce allow it, ſeek for private inſtruction.——And add, it cannot be reaſonably ſuſpected, that thoſe, who, of their own accord, beſtow their time and money to procure theſe lectures, do not endeavour to gain inſtruction from them." You here, I preſume, only mean the Sophs; many of whom, of their own accord, take a private Tutor, in order to prepare them for Examination at the time of taking their Bachelors Degree.

Many of our Students, during this year, do, I believe, really endeavour to gain inſtruction, and many, I doubt not, lament their having ſpent the firſt years of their reſidence in indolence or extravagance;—many, perhaps, ſecretly wiſh, that the wiſdom of their Superiors had made *ſuch Laws and Regulations* as might *ſucceſsfully* have incited them to a *more early application*. To make ſome amends for time miſpent, thoſe who are ambitious of high Honours at the time of trial, too generally, as has been obſerved,

ſerved, ſpend the laſt year " in an obſtinate courſe of labours, which enfeeble the mental powers of the Student, at the ſame time that they have not unfrequently been known to be deſtructive of his health."* Some recent Inſtances of this nature, cannot be reflected on without pain.

When you ſay, almoſt all Noblemen and Gentlemen of fortune have private Tutors, I believe you ſay the truth: but ſurely you do not mean to inſinuate, that therefore the late *Project* was founded on a *Calumny!* I muſt miſunderſtand you.—For although I allow, that almoſt all Noblemen and Gentlemen of fortune, have private Tutors; yet as theſe Tutors are *frequently*, and indeed very properly, *appointed* by their Parents or Guardians (or at leaſt at their requeſt) to ſay they are *voluntary Pupils*, and perſons *who ſeek for inſtruction*, can ſcarcely be called a fair repreſentation, and ſeems mentioned only to miſlead your readers, and make them the more eaſily believe you when you inſinuate, that the late Project was founded on a CALUMNY.

Poſſibly you will tell me, that although I deny that the late Project was founded on a Calumny, yet I do not attempt to diſprove it " by facts. That I do wiſely in not calling theſe unexceptionable Witneſſes. That they would declare againſt me." To which

* Remarks upon the preſent Mode of Education, &c. 4th Edit. p. 7.

which I anſwer, I would not willingly reflect upon the character of any Individuals; and I think it would be even unjuſt in this caſe, as their faults are in a great meaſure owing to ourſelves.

But as ſome proof that the late project was not entirely founded upon a Calumny, permit me to produce the opinion of an unexceptionable perſon, to quote the *words* of an Enemy to Examinations—*the words of your Aſſociate*.

I know, ſays the Letter-writer, " that it has been long lamented, and it is, no doubt, much to be lamented, that Noblemen and Fellow-Commoners have not greater incentives, not to ſay obligations, to ſtudy. I admit that it is a public calamity, that thoſe who, from their rank or fortune, are deſtined to fill the firſt places in this country, and to be the mind of the national body, ſhould loſe thoſe early opportunities of preparing their underſtandings for the knowledge and buſineſs of the World." The Writer is indeed unwilling to impute this to any defect in univerſity education, and unjuſtly imagines that the evil entirely " proceeds from the idle vanity of parents, or is the almoſt neceſſary conſequence of opulent circumſtances, or great expectations. Who, ſays he, will liſten to the complaints of that Father who is tickled with the gold

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or ſilver Taſſel of his boy, and wonders, that with ſo pretty an exterior, the young 'Squire ſhould have had no attention to ſpare to what is within?"

The Letter-writer proceeds, "But you will be ready to ſay, that as Parents will certainly continue to admit their ſons Fellow-Commoners, and to complain of their extreme ignorance, it is the duty of the Univerſity to contrive every poſſible incentive, and to afford all poſſible opportunities to ſtudy." What this Gentleman has ſuggeſted, is certainly the obvious reply to all he had been aſſerting; and the Univerſity appears to me to be without excuſe, for not contriving ſome method to obviate the growing evil; or, if that be impracticable, for not aboliſhing the order.

Your Aſſociate further informs us, "that the order of Fellow-Commoners, has, by immemorial uſage, a kind of preſcriptive right to idleneſs; and faſhion has inſpired it with an habitual contempt of diſcipline." And, ſo ſtrongly is he prepoſſeſſed with the Idea of their preſent untractable and rebellious ſpirit, that he ſeems to apprehend the utter ſubverſion of our Academical Diſcipline, would be the probable conſequence of "invading the Privileges of theſe LICENSED SONS OF IGNORANCE."

In vain then do you boaſt (for two pages together) of the many and great advantages the Youth have in private Colleges under their Governors and Tutors "that they teach and examine them daily—That they *can* quicken one by difficulties, and not diſcourage another by propoſing to him ſubjects above his reach—That if the Students fortune ſets him above any expectations from his College, yet the approbation of his Parents and Friends will depend in a great meaſure upon the teſtimony of thoſe to whom they have committed the care of his education—That the Tutor cannot want motives to uſe his Authority for the good of his Pupils—That the particular College in which a young Nobleman or Gentleman is admitted, is uſually determined by ſome connection of the Society, or ſome principal Member of it, or of the Tutor, with his Family; that in ſuch caſes, private regard and ſometimes views of intereſt, will coincide with a ſenſe of duty, and make the Perſons to whom he is intruſted, very ſolicitous for his improvement—That when any of them diſtinguiſhes himſelf in learning, the Tutor and the Pupil ſhare the joy.—That this union of their pleaſure, and the conſtant intercourſe between them, are naturally productive of mutual affection and regard, which increaſe the Authority of the Tutor, and render the exerciſe of it mild and liberal." For, if with all theſe advantages,

vantages, even your aſſociate allows there is ſuch great cauſe to complain, let us add *Inducement* to Inducement, *Authority* to Authority.

You proceed, " If, with all theſe advantages, the Authority of Governors and Tutors cannot ſecure the attention of every young Student, is it therefore to be aboliſhed?" As if adding *Public* Laws and Regulations to *private* Laws and Regulations, without contradicting them, were reducing every thing into a ſtate of anarchy and confuſion! Could the late Plan of Examinations poſſibly have leſſened the Authority of the Governors or Tutors? Could it have leſſened the affection between Tutor and Pupil? Could the Univerſity's calling upon the Youth to give ſome proof of their having improved under the Tutors in their ſeparate Colleges, have rendered them leſs deſirous of attending to their inſtructions?—How nearly impoſſible is it for a bad cauſe to be well defended!

You, Sir, vainly endeavour to prove, there is no reaſon for eſtabliſhing Public Examinations—And your Aſſociate the Letter-writer, I think, as vainly endeavours to prove, that (with reſpect to the Noblemen and Fellow-Commoners) " if the moſt perfect plan of diſcipline were formed, it would ſcarcely be *poſſible* to give to it that *authority* which is neceſſary to command *attention* and *compliance*."

This Writer complains only of the Noblemen and Fellow-Commoners. But as has been before obſerved, the Penſioners too frequently ſpend the firſt years of their reſidence in indolence or extravagance. The reaſon is obvious—The time of their giving any public proof of the progreſs they have made in their literary attainments, is at too great a diſtance from admiſſion to have its proper effect—We do not hear many complaints of the Students, during the laſt year of their reſidence. The reaſon is plain. They have a noble object in view, they are preparing for *public examination*—and are in hopes of an honorary reward.

And why may we not expect, that public Examinations would have the ſame effect upon the Noblemen and Fellow-Commoners? They are in general educated at the ſame Schools, are *there* under the ſame diſcipline; and are ſuppoſed to come to the Univerſity as well prepared, in every reſpect, as the Penſioners.——Had they, therefore, the ſame expectation of being publicly examined, and diſtinguiſhed accroding to their merit, I doubt not but they would be emulous of equalling the Penſioners in *every* literary attainment.

You ſeem to think, that young men are nearly alike at *all times*; and, therefore, that " if the fault alledged be almoſt univerſal, it muſt be owing to ſome

ſome defect in our original inſtitutions," which you are very unwilling to allow. To which I reply, I do not think that young men *are* nearly alike at *all times*——And therefore, the ſame inſtitutions, which might formerly anſwer the end intended, may nevertheleſs *be now defective.*

Our national manners vary—We educate our Children, *even from their Cradles*, in a manner very different from former times—We now treat them like men, at an age, when formerly they had ſcarcely left their Nurſeries. This difference in their education, naturally makes a difference in their manners. And we have long found, that we cannot govern our Youth here *now*, as Youth at their age *were wont* to be governed. And we have ſo far accommodated to the times, as to relax of our boyiſh diſcipline, but like unwiſe Guardians, we have neglected to ſubſtitute more ſuitable diſcipline in its ſtead. What we *relaxed* of our former diſcipline, ſurely, ought to have been ſupplied by *Laws* more fitted for the man. We ſhould have endeavoured to keep them from the paths of *vice* and *folly*, by *rules* and *regulations* adapted to the times——We ſhould have endeavoured, by every *poſſible incentive* to ſtudy, to have made them *ambitious* of acquiring *every manly attainment*—But inſtead of this, we have ſuffered parts of our diſcipline to decay, and by not judiciouſly, and timely repairing the breach,

the remainder, like the venerable Ruins of an antient Caſtle, only reminds us of what it hath been, and we let fall a tear to ſee it mouldering into Duſt.

You ſeem to object to the Examiners being *hired*, as you invidiouſly term it, at the mean price of ten guineas. If you could always find proper perſons who would take the office for the honour alone, I have no objection; but to make the ſtipend more than equal to the trouble of it, might poſſibly lead to an evil, which cannot be too carefully guarded againſt.

As to the Examiners being "*Strangers* to moſt of the Pupils, to their abilities, their previous education, and the profeſſions or ſtations for which they are deſigned." Surely you could not ſeriouſly mention this as an objection! Surely you do not mean to inſinuate, that the Lectures of the public Tutors are adapted to the *different capacities* and *particular proſpects* of the perſons who attend them!

I will venture to aſſert, that the public Tutors *do not vary* their inſtructions according to the ability, &c. of the Pupil. I will appeal to yourſelf, whether they give Lectures on Government to thoſe who are intended for Statesmen; Lectures in Divinity to thoſe who are intended for the Church; Lectures in Blackſtone, &c. &c. to thoſe who are intended for the

the Law; and in Phyſic to the Youth who are intended for Phyſicians; Do they not on the contrary, give the *ſame public Lectures* to all the Youth who are admitted of the ſame year, without *any diſtinction?* The Youth, therefore, to be examined would have all attended, or *ought all to have attended*, the ſame public Lectures, and therefore would, or ought to have had (as far as the Examiners are concerned) the ſame previous and neceſſary preparation.

" Perſons at a diſtance, you ſay, may be deceived by the title of *public* which has been given to theſe Examinations; but here we all know, that according to every Plan offered to the Senate, the *judgment* only was intended to be public, the *trial* both ſhort and private, neither ſo long, nor open to ſo many hearers as thoſe they go through under a diligent Tutor every week, and the equity of the judgment was to depend on the very quick diſcernment, and ſteady impartiality of the Triers."

I apprehend you would find it very difficult to prove the truth *of any one* of the above aſſertions.

As to College Examinations, I cannot learn that there are any of conſequence, excepting thoſe which are held half-yearly at St. John's. Thoſe, I believe, may be called *public*, with reſpect to the College

College itſelf, but are certainly *private*, with reſpect to the reſt of the Univerſity.

But let us ſuppoſe for a moment, that there are weekly examinations, and in every College. And let us contraſt ſuch examinations with the Plan lately propoſed to the Senate, in order to ſhew the more clearly, how little your aſſertions, relating to that Plan, are to be depended upon; and to give the public an opportunity of judging, how far ſuch weekly examinations would render the lately propoſed Plan unneceſſary.

The number of Students admitted in the ſame year, under each Tutor, in the two large Colleges, may be from FIFTEEN TO TWENTY; in the other Colleges, conſiderably under that number, in ſome inſtances not more than two. And therefore the Number of perſons attending the weekly Examinations in the Tutor's Chamber, may be in the large Colleges ſometimes TWENTY, ſometimes FIFTEEN; in the ſmaller, perhaps ſix, or eight, or ten, and ſometimes only two.

The number of Students at the Examinations, intended to have been eſtabliſhed by the lately propoſed Plan, would, according to the Author of the OBSERVATION, *have been about* TWO HUNDRED, *which, during the trial by the* appointed *Examiners, might have been divided into* equal *ſets of* TWENTY *in each ſet.*

The

The time the Students ſtay in the Tutor's chamber is one Hour.

The time of ſtay in the Senate Houſe, ſix hours the two firſt days, and three the laſt; and therefore the time of trial, if each ſet conſiſted of 20 *Students, would be an hour and an half under* each *of the* appointed *Examiners, excluſive of the Examinations by the* voluntary *Examiners.*

According to the Syſtem of weekly Examinations, the perſons examined are all of the ſame College, and of courſe their *relative* merit *known*, previous to the time of Trial.

According to the Plan propoſed in the Graces, the perſons examined would have been of different Colleges, and conſequently their relative *merit* unknown, *till the day of trial.*

In the weekly Examinations, the place of meeting is the Tutor's chamber.

According to the Graces, the place of meeting would have been the public Senate Houſe.

In the weekly Examinations, the ſole perſon examining the Students, is the Tutor of their own College.

According to the Graces, they would have been examined by public Examiners appointed by the Colleges, in rotation, and by every other member of the Senate, at his pleaſure.

If

If the Tutor ſhould be partial in his Examination, no other perſon is preſent to controul or check ſuch partiality.

In the Examinations propoſed by the Graces, if the appointed *Examiners ſhould be inclined to ſhew any partiality, the* voluntary *Examiners would have it in their power to prevent its effects, by giving their judgment, as in the caſe of the Bachelors degree, to which this Examination is intended to bear a perfect reſemblance.*

In the weekly Examinations, there are no honorary rewards propoſed to animate the Students to a vigorous exertion of their powers.

Incentives are propoſed by the Graces, ſuperior in probable efficacy, even to thoſe, which have already been found to be attended with ſuch ſalutary effects in the caſe of the Bachelors degree.

I fancy the generality of my readers will now be fully convinced, that the title of *public* was not improperly given to the Examinations preſcribed in the Plan you have choſen to oppoſe. And I cannot help thinking, that all perſons, who are not entirely unacquainted with our Univerſity, will ſee, that every objection you have made, or rather framed, againſt

againſt the Plan which was lately rejected, you might with as much, nay more propriety, have urged againſt the Examinations, and cuſtomary manner of ſettling the honours at the Bachelors degree.

The Proctors and Moderators examine in the abſtruſeſt parts of Mathematics and Philoſophy, which is going *much beyond the Lectures* of the public Tutors—and therefore you might perhaps, with ſome appearance of truth, aſſert, that the Proctors and Moderators " take the direction of the Studies of our Youth, from the particular Colleges, and the Tutors there appointed to inſtruct them." But in the Plan *you oppoſe*, the appointed Examiners, if we except Modern Hiſtory, were entirely confined to the Lectures of the public Tutors.

As there are not many perſons who continue to ſtudy the abſtruſer parts of Mathematics or Philoſophy, there are but few Examiners at the Bachelors degree, beſides the Proctors* and Moderators, excepting the Father of each College, who is obliged to attend, whatever may be his ſkill in mathematical, or philoſophical knowledge. But we may reaſonably preſume, that, in the preſent caſe, the voluntary Examiners would be *more numerous*, as they would be permitted to examine in the Latin

* The Proctors examine only thoſe perſons who are Candidates for the higher honours.

and Greek Claſſics, and as an Examination in the depths of Mathematical and Philoſophical knowledge would not be required.—Conſequently, there would be a greater number of checks to any partiality, or wrong judgment of an appointed Examiner.‡

You object, that amongſt the young men who are to be examined, " there muſt often be ſome better Scholars than the appointed Examiners."—That there muſt *often* be ſome better Scholars I cannot eaſily believe. For a Youth, however great his abilities may be, will, from the difference in age, ſcarcely have had time to make ſo great a progreſs in learning, as perſons of higher ſtanding, even if thoſe perſons ſhould happen to have parts leſs brilliant. Beſides, as Maſters and Tutors have generally great influence in their reſpective Societies, and as it would be for the intereſt of each Society to make choice of a proper Examiner, we may ſurely with great reaſon conclude, that whilſt there are men of learning and ability in the Univerſity, no College would ever appoint an Examiner who was not *properly* qualified for the office.

However,

‡ One of the advantages expected to ariſe from the Eſtabliſhment of Public Examinations was, that it would afford inducements to Gentlemen of longer ſtanding, not only to retain the knowledge they had gained, but to apply themſelves, with increaſing vigor, to ſuch parts of Literature, as would make them fit to be either the voluntary or the appointed Examiners.

However, we will ſuppoſe it poſſible, that a Youth who was to be examined, might ſometimes know more than the appointed Examiners. Is not the caſe much more likely to happen at the Examinations for degrees? Muſt there *therefore* be no ſuch Examinations? May not the caſe alſo happen at St John's College? and if the objection has any weight, it muſt certainly affect Dr. Powell's Examinations: yet ſurely, he would think that perſon *very unwiſe*, who would on that account adviſe him to forego the great advantage of his Plan.

" But the rules propoſed, you tell us, did not affect the Students only. The Tutors too, the eſtabliſhed and experienced Tutors, muſt have ſubmitted to the ſame direction, and have changed their Lectures every year according to the fancies of theſe Examiners; or have ſent their Pupils unprepared to the examinations." To remove every objection of the kind you mention, ſeems clearly to have been the chief reaſon which induced the Author of the late Propoſal, to alter the Plan of the worthy and learned Syndicate—That he hath connected the Examinations with the Lectures, I hope I have ſufficiently made appear in a former part of this Letter.* But in anſwer to your very extraordinary aſſertion, " that the Tutors muſt

* Page 8 and 9.

have *changed* their Lectures *every year*, &c." I will beg leave to quote the fourteenth Grace.

" In all future years after 1776, there ſhall be a public Examination of ſuch Noblemen, Fellow-Commoners, Penſioners, and Sizars, as ſhall then be of equal ſtanding with thoſe intended to be examined in 1776, *and the ſubjects* and time ſhall be *the ſame with thoſe directed for* 1776.—There ſhall alſo be in every year ſubſequent to the year 1777, a public Examination of ſuch Noblemen and Fellow-Commoners as ſhall be of equal ſtanding with thoſe directed for 1777, *and the ſubjects* and time ſhall be *the ſame with thoſe directed for* 1777. And in both the above Examinations, the Examiners, hereafter to be appointed, ſhall make the ſame Honorary Diſtinctions as in the years 1776, and 1777, and attendance ſhall be ſecured by the ſame ſanctions."

As therefore the *ſubjects* of the Examinations were not to have *varied*, I humbly conceive there could have been no neceſſity for the Tutors to have *changed* their Lectures.

" Whatever reformation is wanted among our Youth, you ſay, may eaſily be introduced in the ſeparate Colleges." If you mean that ſuch reformation might be introduced by the help of *Examinations*, I ſuppoſe you forget thoſe, which you have informed

informed us the Youth *already have* under a diligent Tutor *every week*. The addition of *one* or *two* more to theſe, in their own *private* Colleges, ſurely could not effect a reformation!

You talk much of the power and authority, which the Maſter and Fellows have in their private Colleges—-that they can expel, ruſticate, &c. &c. "Some, you ſay, have thought, that this authority cannot have ſufficient influence in the very ſmall Colleges; as if it were more difficult to govern few than many. But the grounds of this miſtake are evident."

Now I humbly conceive, that the miſtake is entirely your own, and that no one ever ſuppoſed, that a ſmall College was not *as eaſily governed* as a large one. It has indeed been ſaid, that the lately propoſed Plan of Examinations, could not be adopted with *ſucceſs* in a ſmall College—not that it was thought a *few* were more difficult to *govern than many!*—But becauſe as the honour and the diſgrace would be confined to a few perſons, and within their own private College, ſo the ſpirit of emulation would be confined likewiſe. In the very ſmall Colleges, emulation perhaps would ſcarcely exiſt; and in thoſe that are larger, for want of a wider range, it might, as has been obſerved in St. John's

John's College, " too often produce paſſions of a more malignant kind."

In the very ſmall Colleges, there may ſometimes be no more than *two* or *three* admiſſions in a year; and at thoſe Colleges that are rather larger, frequently not *more* than *ſix*. Theſe ſix Students, by attending the ſame Lectures, and at the ſame time by converſing with each other every day, would, we may preſume, nearly know each others merits, even without an Examination in their College Hall, or Tutor's Chamber. Suppoſe then, theſe ſix Students *were* to be formally examined, I fear we could not expect that the Examination would ſo far rouſe the ſpirit of Emulation, as to *create* an Inclination to ſtudy *ſufficient* to *overcome*, or even to *prevent*, an habit of *idleneſs* and *diſſipation*. For I think it is more than probable, that one or two of theſe ſix Students would ſo evidently appear to be ſuperior to the reſt, that the other four would never think of aſpiring to an equality with them.—The firſt and ſecond then would form a ſeparate Claſs—The third and fourth might be as much ſuperior to the fifth and ſixth, and would therefore form a ſecond Claſs. The two laſt, ſeeing they muſt remain inferior to the other four, might poſſibly grow idle through deſpair. But be this as it may—Theſe ſix Students will be in three different Claſſes,

two

two in each Claſs. Theſe two, being of the ſame College, are in all probability intimate friends, or at leaſt ſo much acquainted, that they would eaſily find out how much labour (or whether any) was neceſſary to keep their reſpective places—And perhaps to keep their reſpective places in their own private College, would, during the three firſt years of their reſidence, be the height of their ambition; unleſs either of them happened to be of a *ſtudious* diſpoſition, which circumſtance might *poſſibly* raiſe a ſpirit of emulation in his aſſociate.

But when theſe three Claſſes know that they are to be examined in the public Senate Houſe, they begin to look upon Examination as an affair of greater importance. They perceive, if they merit diſgrace, *that diſgrace* will be no longer confined—If they merit honour, *that honour* will be both *public* and *laſting*. And each Claſs will ſee reaſon to apprehend, that amongſt two hundred Students, there may be numbers ſo nearly upon a par with themſelves, that a place of honour may be loſt by the idleneſs of a ſingle day. Their Emulation is now no longer confined—each Claſs will have its opponents. The two in the firſt Claſs will have reaſon to fear, that, although with very little attention to their ſtudies, they might continue *ſuperior* to the other Claſſes in their own College, yet without great

great application, they may be *inferior* to many in the Senate Houſe. And the third Claſs may have reaſon to hope, that, although the *loweſt* in their own *College*, yet, by paying a proper attention to the Lectures of their Tutors, and diligently applying themſelves to their ſtudies, they may be enabled to paſs ſuch a reputable examination, as will make them appear *ſuperior* to numbers at a more *public* time of trial.

Upon the whole, Sir, I think it muſt evidently appear, that no Examination in a private College, not even in *St. John's* College, can *ſuperſede*, or render *unneceſſary* the excellent Plan lately propoſed to the Senate.—A Plan, which neither is at variance with the Lectures of the public Tutors, nor could poſſibly impede a ſingle part of the diſcipline of a private College.—Their Inſtructions and Government might continue the ſame—The Powers of the Maſter and Fellows of each Society, to expel, &c. would not be leſſened; nor would any "milder kind of authority" loſe its Influence—Still would the Youth be obliged to attend to the ſame *domeſtic* inſtruction, and equally bound to obey the ſame *domeſtic* Laws.

To raiſe and to quicken in Youth a *deſire* of attending to the Inſtruction of their Tutors, and to prevent,

prevent, as much as poſſible, *every diſpoſition* to diſobedience, ſeems evidently to have been the deſign of the late Plan; and I doubt not but ſuch will be its effects, whenever that majority, which at preſent are known to favour it, ſhall think proper to paſs it into a Law.

I truſt I have made it appear, notwithſtanding any thing you may have aſſerted, that the Plan for Public Examinations was not a Novelty, that could tend to overthrow any part of our preſent diſcipline. Some ſuch *Novelties*, you tell us, have been "introduced by men, who did not perceive their tendency." That which I cannot underſtand, I will not contradict. "But *one* you ſay ſhall be juſt mentioned."

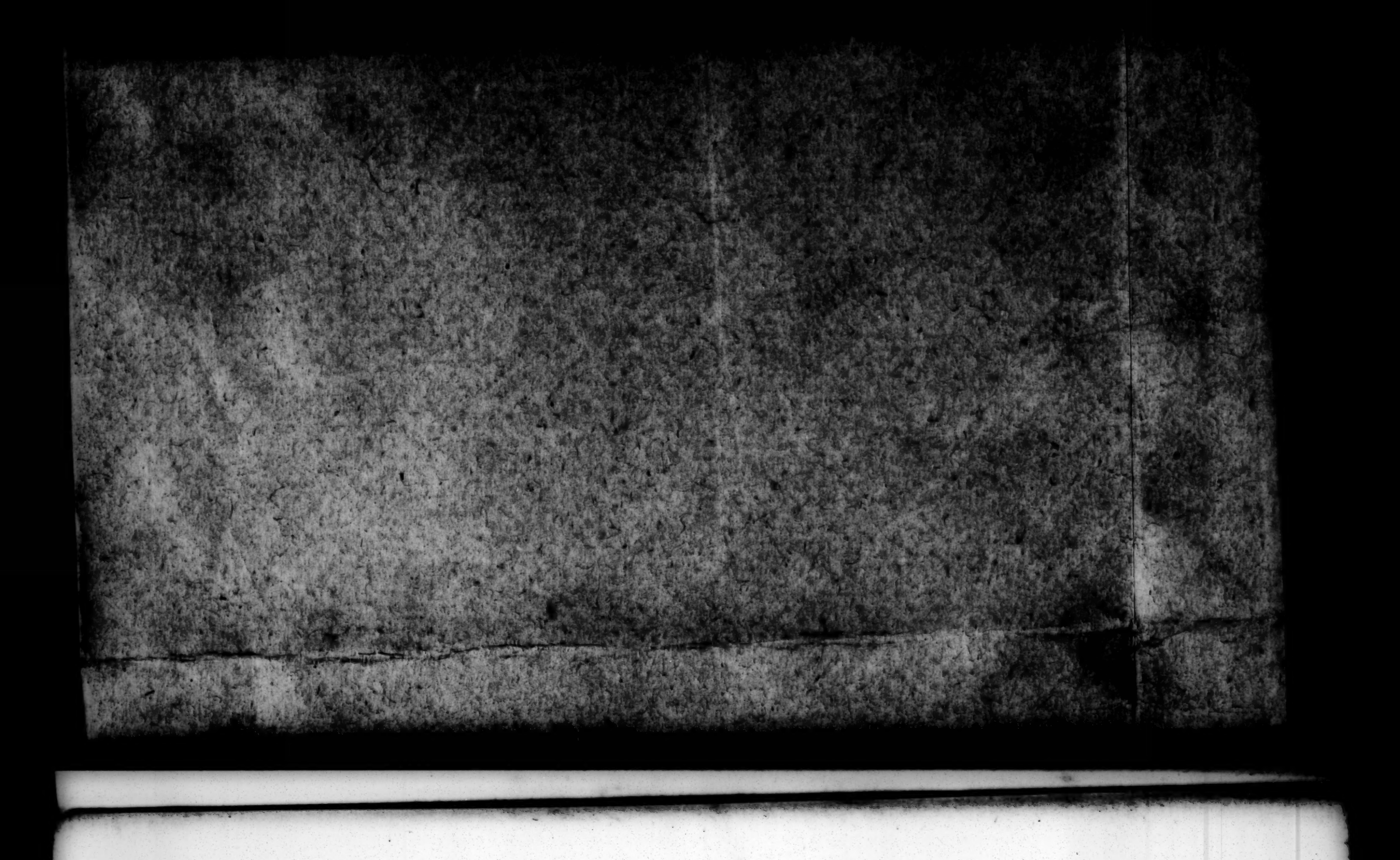
"THE PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY, in a public advertiſement, deſires the Heads of Colleges to ſend the names of *ſuch as they appoint* to attend his lectures; but deſires the Noblemen, who *deſign* to attend, to ſend their own names."

It is indeed a *Novelty* for a PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY to give Lectures—But this is not the *Novelty* you mean to reprehend. That which you complain of, it ſeems, is, that "The Noblemen who deſign to attend, are deſired to ſend their own names."

names." This complaint is the more extraordinary, becauſe no other PROFESSOR ever deſires the *Heads of Colleges* to ſend in the names either of the Noblemen, Fellow-Commoners, or any other Student—The *Novelty* therefore conſiſts in the Heads of Colleges having the *power* of appointing ſuch other Students, as they chuſe ſhould attend—and the reaſon of ſuch Novelty ſeems to have been as follows:—It was ſuppoſed, that if, beſides the Noblemen, every Fellow-Commoner, &c. who might chuſe to attend Lectures upon Modern Hiſtory, were to attend at the ſame time, the number might be too great;—it was therefore ſettled between the Profeſſor, and the Heads of Houſes, that only a certain number of other Students out of their reſpective Colleges ſhould attend each courſe; and, that the Heads of Houſes ſhould appoint them. I am perſuaded, Sir, you will find, either on *recollection*, or enquiry, that this is a true ſtate of the caſe, and conſequently will ſee reaſon to confeſs, that your REPREHENSION WAS UNJUST.

Having finiſhed my remarks upon what is contained in your OBSERVATION, all I ſhall add is—That for the ſake of the Univerſity—for the ſake of Youth—and for the ſake of thoſe Parents, who commit them to our guidance, I cannot help earneſtly wiſhing ſucceſs to the Plan, lately propoſed

to

to the Senate, for the eſtabliſhing of Public Examinations.——For the ſake of the Univerſity, becauſe I am perſuaded the eſtabliſhment of the propoſed Scheme is abſolutely neceſſary to redeem our credit—For the ſake of Youth, becauſe I think it would cauſe them to ſpurn each ignobler gratification, and animate them to a vigorous purſuit of every rational, every laudable attainment—For the ſake of Parents, that they might have the heart-felt ſatisfaction of receiving their Sons from the Univerſity, improved in Knowledge, by her Diligence, and in Virtue, by her maternal Care.

I am, Sir, &c.